

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 264
By McMillan

A RESOLUTION to express the unqualified support of this General Assembly and the people of Tennessee for the efforts of U.S. and coalition forces, especially the 101st Airborne Division, to depose the regime of Saddam Hussein, free the Iraqi people, and remove the threat of weapons of mass destruction.

WHEREAS, throughout our national history, the people of this State and nation have firmly supported the armed forces of our nation in our various conflicts against tyranny and oppression wherever we have confronted such evil forces in the world; and

WHEREAS, since the horrific events of September 11, 2001, when the United States suffered an atrocious attack on the twin towers of the World Trade Center in lower Manhattan in New York City and on the Pentagon in the Washington, D.C. area, Americans have been forced to acknowledge our vulnerability to assault by the forces of international terrorism and the necessity to confront such forces on a global scale; and

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WHEREAS, our first major response to that terrorism was Operation Enduring Freedom in which a multinational coalition overthrew the Taliban regime of Afghanistan and evicted their Al-Qaeda "guests," depriving them of their main base of terrorist operations; and

WHEREAS, in keeping with the new-found realization that terrorism must be confronted wherever it is found in the world, the present Administration turned its attention to the regime of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, which, since the conclusion of the Gulf War in 1991, has failed to comply with U.N. Security Council resolutions demanding that it completely divest itself of weapons of mass destruction; and

WHEREAS, when renewed U.N. inspections faced a continuation of Iraqi intransigence, lack of cooperation, and duplicity, and after repeated warnings and deadlines, a multinational mobilization was launched to disarm Iraq and effect a regime change; this mission has been designated as Operation Iraqi Freedom; and

WHEREAS, almost a quarter of a million U.S. and coalition military forces have been deployed in the Persian Gulf region, including regular U.S. Army, Navy, Marine, and Air Force personnel as well as reservists and National Guard personnel; prominent among these forces are elements of the famed 101st Airborne Division, based at Fort Campbell, Kentucky; and

WHEREAS, Tennesseans have long closely identified with the 101st "Screaming Eagles" as the Fort Campbell reservation lies in large part within this State, as well as in Kentucky; first authorized in 1918 as a part of the mobilization for World War I, the 101st was never fully manned or organized for that war and existed from 1921 to the outbreak of World War II as the 101st Infantry Division based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, responding to the need for airborne forces for World War II, the 101st Airborne Division was activated on August 16, 1942; a long and heroic history began with its participation in the Normandy Invasion, Operation Market Garden, and the Battle of the Bulge in the European theater; and

WHEREAS, the Screaming Eagles served with great valor in Vietnam, Operation Desert Storm, and Operation Enduring Freedom, admirably led by outstanding commanders and junior officers and served by brave and highly proficient enlisted service men and women; on February 6, 2003, elements of the 101st Airborne Division were deployed to the Persian Gulf region prior to the March 19, 2003, commencement of hostilities; and

WHEREAS, from the Division command base in northern Kuwait, elements of the 101st have entered Iraq and are currently engaged in conflict with hostile Iraqi forces; all Tennesseans are, as are all Americans, conscious of the great sacrifice of the courageous men and women of the 101st who have undertaken this dangerous action on our behalf; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly wishes to go on record in an expression of unqualified support for all U.S. and coalition forces, especially including the 101st Airborne Division, in their gallant efforts on behalf of U.S. and worldwide security; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that the members of this General Assembly, on behalf of the people of Tennessee, offer our deepest appreciation and heartfelt gratitude to all U.S. and coalition forces, and especially to the men and women of the 101st Airborne Division, as they enter harm's way to free the Iraqi people from the terrorist oppression of the regime of Saddam Hussein and to pave the way for the removal of his weapons of mass destruction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we offer our fervent prayers along with those of family members, for the safe return of their sons and daughters; for those families who have suffered the loss of their loved ones, we extend our condolences and offer our shared grief along with our undying gratitude for their noble sacrifice in the cause of freedom.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.

